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ART. XII.—*The American Journal of Science and Arts, conducted by Professor Silliman.*

WE should think ourselves much to blame, did we allow any vague notion of the delicacy to be observed by periodical works in noticing each other, to prevent our asking the attention of the American public to Mr Silliman's *Journal of Science and the Arts*. There is no occasion to enter critically into a survey of its contents, nor does the scientific public among us stand in need of our testimony to its respectability. But as a work, which does honor to American science, and as a vehicle of imparting to the world the scientific speculations and discoveries of our countrymen which is held in honorable esteem by the philosophers of Europe, we cannot but express the hope, that this journal will attract a greater patronage than our community has hitherto done itself the credit of bestowing upon it. We should find it hard to name a literary enterprise in America more likely to be an instrument of raising the reputation of our country abroad, in those departments to which it is devoted. There ought to be, moreover, and we doubt not there is, a class of readers large enough in the United States, who are sufficiently versed in philosophical studies to find pleasure and instruction in the pages of such a journal. And if its plan and objects prevent it from assuming that popular form, which would recommend it to wider favor with the miscellaneous class of readers, we would still beg leave to commend to the consideration of those of them who feel an interest in the intellectual character of our country the strong claims on their patronage of a work of this kind, and the sort of duty which, in our judgment, devolves on all who have the ability, to promote the success of a publication like this, the rather for the abstract and scientific character which a portion of its contents must necessarily assume and which costs it a share of popularity. We should augur ill for the cause of elevated studies among us, if nothing can succeed with our reading community but miscellaneous, desultory literature, studiously fashioned to the taste of the day. At the same time, we would not be thought to intimate, that the *Journal of Science* is of an arid and repulsive cast; but judging from the numbers published, we can venture to promise our readers much information from its pages on various topics with which no well educated man, of

any profession or taste, can advantageously remain unacquainted. We beg leave to extract from the last number of this journal the preface to the third volume, which will assist our readers in judging to what degree it is desirable, that an increased patronage should be extended to this work.

‘The third volume of this work being now completed, all concerned in its success will naturally wish some account of its situation and prospects. The experiment of an original American Journal of Science is novel, and it is but reasonable to allow sufficient time to the community to become informed as to the nature of the enterprise before we can expect them to feel interested in its prosperity. The question whether it is to be supported by adequate pecuniary remuneration, is not one which can be hastily decided. It must require several years from the commencement of the work, and the editor, (if God continues his life and health,) will endeavour to prove himself neither impatient nor querulous, during the time that his countrymen hold the question undecided, *whether there shall be an American Journal of Science and Arts.* Another person may conduct it better, and to such an one, the task would be, without hesitation, resigned. But it is due to our numerous and highly respectable band of contributors to say, that no successor, however meritorious, can hope to be better supported. That the Journal is appreciated abroad, in a manner gratifying to its friends, is sufficiently evinced by the numerous extracts from it in the periodical scientific works of Europe, by the readiness to exchange, evinced by the Editors of foreign Journals, and by letters on the subject, addressed to the editor of the American Journal, from scientific and literary men abroad. Among them are the names of the late Dr John Murray of Edinburgh, of Dr Thomas Thomson, now Regius-Professor of Chemistry &c. in the University of Glasgow, of Mr Tilloch of London, editor of the Philosophical Magazine, of Mr Julien, editor of the *Revue Encyclopédique*, and of Mr Brongniart, both of Paris; of Professor Germar and Sweigger of the University of Halle in Germany, and of Professor Berzelius of Stockholm. From one of these private communications, we shall presume so far on the indulgence of the author, and of the public, as to cite a single paragraph.*

‘Dr Thomson, speaking of the first five numbers of the American Journal, (which were all that he had then seen) says; “I hail it as a commencement of American scientific periodical works, and have no doubt from the valuable matter which you have already

* ‘One other passage is selected from Mr Brongniart’s letter. [See p. 218 of this Vol.]’

presented us with, that America will rival the most scientific countries in the old world." The citing of this passage would be inconsistent with decorum, were not the commendation of this illustrious author, and teacher, and editor, chiefly the property of our contributors, and but in a small degree our own. The celebrated Professor Ferrara of the University of Palermo in the Island of Sicily, speaking on the subject of American Science, said recently to a friend of the editor, that he "did not doubt that the Sciences and Arts would, before long, pass to America in their highest perfection, and that we should ere long succeed to Asia and Europe, in the literary empire of the world."

'But, on the other hand, we are now bound in justice to the interests of American Science, not to withhold from its patrons the fact, that the two first volumes of this Journal have been, thus far, *in a pecuniary view, losing concerns*. The proprietors of the first volume have not yet received back the money which they have expended—nor is the editor yet repaid, simply for the paper, printing and engraving of the second volume, and that upon the supposition that all the money is collected from the contractors for quantities.

But it is some relief to add, that the patronage, during the past year, has been *gradually*, but on the whole *regularly*, increasing, and, as it now stands, will probably just about cover the expense of the materials and mechanical labor of the the third volume. Nothing has ever been paid for contributions to the pages of the work; to the honor of our scientific friends, they have contributed their gratuitous labors with cheerfulness and perseverance, and the scientific public, both at home and abroad, have already decided favorably on their productions.

With this simple statement of facts, we now dismiss the subject, after expressing our determination, notwithstanding all discouragements, to proceed, cheerfully, and with good courage, in our labor, contented also to relinquish it whenever others will more faithfully and successfully perform it, or our country shall have clearly decided that it does not approve, or will not support our undertaking.'

May, 1821.